



400 R STREET, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814-6200

**DRAFT****Task Force on Culturally and Linguistically  
Competent Physicians and Dentists  
October 2, 2001****Task Force Members Present**

Diana Bontá, R.N., Dr. P.H., Director, Department of Health Services, Co-Chair  
Kathleen Hamilton, Director, Department of Consumer Affairs, Co-Chair  
David Carlisle, M.D., Ph.D., Director, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development  
Anil Chawla, M.D., M.D., Clinicas del Camino Real  
Georgetta Coleman, Executive Director, Dental Board of California  
Tomiko Conner, Director, Community Voices Initiative  
Ron Joseph, Executive Director, Medical Board of California  
Earl Lui, Attorney, Consumers Union  
Eva Vasquez-Camacho, United Farm Workers  
Melissa Welch, M.D., M.P.H., Health Plan of San Mateo  
Doreena Wong, Legal Counsel, National Health Law Program

**Staff Members Present**

Kristy Wiese, Assistant Deputy Director, Department of Consumer Affairs  
Jean Iacino, Special Assistant to the Director, Department of Health Services  
Anita Scuri, Legal Counsel, Department of Consumer Affairs

**Call to Order – Establish a Quorum**

The meeting was called to order at 1:40 p.m., by Kathleen Hamilton, Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and Co-Chair of the Task Force, and Director Diana Bontá, Director of the Department of Health Services (DHS) and Co-Chair of the Task Force. All Task Force Members present introduced themselves.

**Opening comments from co-chairs, Director Hamilton and Director Bontá.****Review and Approve Minutes from the July 10, 2001 Task Force Meeting (Action)**

Ms. Wong requested the minutes be amended to reflect a 30-day modification for the subcommittee report. The July 10, 2001 minutes were approved with the inclusion of the requested amendment.

**Status Reports from Working Groups**

Director Hamilton stated that the establishment of the three working groups was to provide the Task Force with feedback about the specific directives contained in the enabling legislation related to continuing education, cultural competency standards, and the need for voluntary

cultural competency certification. This feedback will inform the Task Force's recommendations to the Legislature.

Director Hamilton requested Ron Joseph provide an update on the first meetings held for the Continuing Education and the Cultural Competency Certification workgroups. Mr. Joseph advised that the purpose and intent for the first meetings were to establish guidelines for future meetings. Mr. Joseph stated he would prepare a letter recommending that the two workgroups be merged, given the overlapping nature of the topics.

Director Hamilton asked Director Bontá to provide an updated report on the Cultural Competency Standards Work Group. Director Bontá advised that the Cultural Competency Standards Work Group's initial meeting was cancelled due to the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and will be rescheduled.

Director Hamilton requested Kristy Wiese to provide an update on the Task Force's first public hearing held in San Diego on September 28, 2001. Ms. Wiese reported that the hearing held at Mercy Scripps Hospital in Downtown, San Diego was attended by interested members of the public and a number of providers who spoke, including a Scripps Mercy neurologist and a community dentist. Ms. Wiese stated some members of the public were medical professionals trained in foreign countries and were working their way through the licensure and residency process to become licensed in California. Ms. Wiese stated this was the first of nine public hearings to be held throughout the State to obtain public testimony and incorporate those recommendations in the final Task Force report.

Director Bontá recommended convening fewer public hearings as a matter of practicality.

Director Hamilton stated the first public hearing that was initially scheduled in September in Oxnard was subsequently cancelled due to the September 11<sup>th</sup> tragedy. That public hearing has been rescheduled for November 7 in Oxnard.

Ms. Wong requested that the Task Force meetings and the public hearings be scheduled on the same day whenever possible. Ms. Wiese informed the group that this would be challenging given the need for large meeting spaces to accommodate the size of the 37 member Task Force. Additionally, Ms. Wiese pointed out that the Task Force meetings are held in Sacramento; whereas, public hearings are scheduled in communities throughout the State.

Ms. Wong inquired if Task Force members could provide testimony at the public hearings. Director Hamilton stated that all the members are encouraged and invited to participate in the public hearings and the Task Force meetings.

**Review Report from the Sub-Committee to the Legislature and Determine the Task Force's Comments to be forwarded to the Legislature (pursuant to AB 2394, Chapter 802, Statutes of 2000) (Action)**

Director Hamilton asked Co-Chair Bontá for an update and review on the Subcommittee report that was submitted to the Legislature.

Director Bontá called upon her staff member, Jean Iacino, to present the update. Ms. Iacino stated that AB 2394 charged the Subcommittee with examining the feasibility of a pilot project to allow Mexican and Caribbean licensed physicians and dentists to practice in nonprofit community health centers in California in medically underserved areas. The Subcommittee met on three separate occasions, May 10, June 19 and July 10, 2001. Ms. Iacino stated that Assembly Member Firebaugh was in attendance at the June 19<sup>th</sup> Subcommittee meeting where he outlined his expectations for the pilot project. She advised that the Subcommittee members considered seven alternative proposals for the pilot project. Ms. Iacino advised that the Subcommittee members concluded that they could not achieve consensus for a pilot project that would be satisfactory to Assembly Member Firebaugh and the bill sponsored by Arnoldo Torres. Ms. Iacino recapped the report that highlighted five major areas of significant disagreement amongst Subcommittee members.

1. Temporary versus permanent nature of the project and if the participants in the pilot project would have permanent status or temporary residency status. (This was a major concern).
2. How the determination would be made for appropriate clinic placement for the physicians and dentists participating in the pilot project.
3. How they could assure that the participants in the pilot project were culturally and linguistically competent and what skills were required for physicians and dentists to assure cultural and linguistic competency of the participants. Is it enough for physicians to share the same ethnic background of their patients or were other skills required? How do you assess these skills or are they more guaranteed by physicians coming from Mexico and the Caribbean or American trained physicians and dentists?
4. The time frame that was needed to implement the project and would it be implemented on a short-term or long-term basis?
5. Specific licensing and residency requirements that would be required of any participant in the pilot projects.

Ms. Iacino stated that consequently the Subcommittee was unable to arrive at a specific recommendation on a pilot project in the report submitted to the Legislature. The Subcommittee disbanded on July 10, which meant that they were no longer conducting business. Ms. Iacino solicited input from the Task Force members regarding the Subcommittee report. Mr. Joseph concurred with her assessment of the Subcommittee, adding that the differences of opinion occurred within the larger context of agreement in other areas.

Director Bontá asked each member of the Task Force present for their comments on the report, beginning with Dr. Chawla. Dr. Chawla stated there were a lot of issues that the Subcommittee agreed upon, but there were also a lot of disagreements.

Dr. Carlisle was asked for his comments. Dr. Carlisle stated this was clearly a difficult policy question and indicated that further deliberation was necessary for resolution.

Eva Vasquez-Camacho was hopeful that the public hearings and the community input would reconcile the major issues.

Ms. Vasquez-Camacho commented it was important to receive testimony from community leaders and advocates in the underserved community to discuss their obstacles in providing patient care. She stated she is aware of physicians who are eager to practice medicine in California, but are unable to meet the licensing requirements.

Ms. Wong was hopeful the Task Force would provide alternative recommendations to resolve the problem of physicians and dentists shortages. She remarked that for the most part, the pilot project might not be the best way to resolve the problem. Ms. Wong stated that the Task Force considers long term solutions for the health care crisis.

Tomiko Conner asked Director Bontá whether the intention was to develop a short-term solution to provide culturally and linguistically competent medical care providers in the underserved areas. Now that the report has been forwarded to the Legislature, what actions will the Legislature take?

Director Bontá advised that on November 30, 2001, a Senate Business and Professions Committee hearing will held in Los Angeles to follow-up on the Assembly Member Firebaugh's bill that would establish a pilot program. Dr. Bontá suggested that the hearing could provide clarification for fact finding for educational medical and dental programs.

Ms. Conner stated the focus should include all international medical students who practice medicine in the State of California. At the public hearings, Ms. Conner recommended providing structured questions to obtain focused comments that might assist the Task Force in developing their recommendations for the final report.

Dr. Welch said she was a physician and was from a unique cultural background and envisioned the challenges faced on both sides of this issue. Dr. Welch questioned if a six-month internship would provide adequate training for foreign-trained physicians and voiced concern that certifying physicians with minimal training could create a marginalized group of physicians. Dr. Welch concurred that the standard process included in any pilot program should include all international medical graduates to expand the number of providers available to serve the underserved population. She felt the Task Force must clarify what the standards for cultural and linguistic competency were before we can offer this as a solution to the participants. Dr. Welch advised that San Francisco was an ideal forum to hold a public hearing. She advised that the San Francisco community advocates would organize community participation. She encouraged the Directors to allow participants to contribute without feeling restrained by questions. Dr. Welch applauded the Task Force Subcommittee Members for their work.

Earl Lui echoed the concerns of Dr. Welch and expressed appreciation for the Subcommittee Members for their observations and decision-making skills.

Georgetta Coleman agreed with the Task Force Members comments regarding the preparation that went into the Subcommittee report.

Director Hamilton applauded the Subcommittee for their good work and stated that she was encouraged by the number of creative alternatives the Subcommittee came to agreement on. Director Hamilton asked whether there was any value to submitting additional comments to the Legislative regarding the areas where the Task Force members were in concurrence. Dr. Welch and Ms. Wong indicated that they would prefer not to submit comments as those comments might be construed as support for a pilot program.

Director Bontá asked Dr. Carlisle if there was anything he would like to add. Dr. Carlisle said there were a number of programs aimed at preparing healthcare professionals to serve in the under served areas. He advised a new project was developed by the Employment Development Department (EDD) and the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) to designate a new job classification called the Senior Nursing Assistant. Dr. Carlisle stated this new position would provide promotional opportunities for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) and thus would allow upward mobility.

Ms. Wong reiterated that the Task Force should concentrate on providing long term recommendations to resolve the problem of physicians and dentists shortages.

Dr. Welch concurred with Ms. Wong that medical schools had abolished incentives to volunteer time for money. She felt that would increase and encourage physicians who are already certified in the United States to work in the underserved communities.

**Presentation by Georgetta Coleman, Executive Officer, Dental Board of California on International Dental Students Licensure Program.**

Ms. Coleman spoke regarding the Dental Board's regulations that would establish a process for the Dental Board to approve foreign dental schools, making it possible for international graduates to compete in the examination process to become licensed in California. Ms. Coleman advised all applicants are currently required to take an examination. She also stated applicants must meet the educational requirements established by the Dental Board before they may compete in the examination process.

Dr. Welch posed a question to Ms. Coleman regarding the equivalency of foreign schools' academic and clinical review training. Ms. Coleman responded that under the new law, prior to the approval of a foreign dental school, the school would be thoroughly evaluated, including the clinical instruction observations, interviewing the students and faculty, and an assessment of the materials and equipments.

Director Hamilton advised that the schools had an obligation to report any significant changes that would affect their accreditation. Director Bontá asked how many applications were received from international schools and who was responsible for the cost. Ms. Coleman responded

approximately seven applications have been received and the schools were responsible for the \$1,000 application fee.

Ms. Wong asked how many graduates the licensing process would affect. Ms. Coleman stated approximately 1100 graduates from the United States as well as international schools apply to the Board for licensure, of which half receive a license.

Ms. Wong asked if by the end of 2003 dental applicants can only become certified in the United States if they have attended an accredited school or were trained at an American accredited school and Ms. Coleman stated yes.

Ms. Wong asked how many applicants would be admitted to the program. Ms. Coleman advised about 20 are accepted annually.

Director Hamilton inquired what the reporting requirements were for the legislature on the foreign accreditation and requested the Dental Board submit a report back to the Task Force.

Ms. Coleman stated she would make a status report available to the Director.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Shaundra Miller, Health Systems Analyst with the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems provided information regarding California's public hospital providers who serve in the underserved communities throughout California. She stated that public hospitals are open door providers who provide services to anyone, regardless of their ability to pay, and promote improving access to culturally competent health care for California's diverse population. She indicated that international medical graduates are more likely to meet credentialing standards in United States hospitals if they have completed postgraduate training in the United States. Her organization does not want to see any diminution in the quality of care to be provided.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.